provisions of the Regulation were kept in abeyance in the interests of the merchants and the ryots. As the boats from Native Cochin and British Cochin were also forcibly registered by the Travancore officers when such boats came to Travancore, there was a proposal, the Member stated, to register all Travancore boats entering Cochin waters. The proposed retaliatory measure would press hard upon the Travancore merchants as they would have to pay treble license fees—one in Travancore, the other in British Cochin and the third in Native Cochin. He added that he had no objection to the Government registering the *kevu valloms* (big cargo boats) and steam and motor boats and regulating the traffic of passengers, but that all other boats owned by merchants and ryots should be exempted.

The Very Revd. Iype Thoma Kuthanar (Member, Nominated) explained at length how the provisions of the Public Canals and Ferries Regulation worked great hardship on the really poor people of the State, who by selling tapioca and fish earned their daily bread and argued that the levy of fees and tolls on ordinary boats and other means of conveyance was quite incompatible with the noble traditions of the Land of Charity. In view of the admission of the Government that they were not actuated by any considerations of revenue in enacting the Regulation and the fact that the revenue derived by its working amounted to but a paltry sum of Rs. 19,000 per annum, the Member said there was no justification for retaining such a harassing piece of legislation on the statute book. It was not therefore his proposal to omit any section or sections from it but to repeal the entire Regulation. He added that the noble object of the Regulation could well be secured by a few simple executive rules or by enacting any other more suitable Regulation.

Mr. N. Parameswara Panicker (Member, Changanacherri taluk) said that he had nothing more to add to what the other Members had already spoken.

Dewan's reply.—Noted. The Chief Engineer will be asked to report whether there is any objection to increasing the number of registering stations.

VI. PUBLIC HEALTH—T. I. C. AND MEDICAL RELIEF.

(1) Town Improvement Committees.

96. Reform and extension of local self-government.

Mr. A. G. Menon (Member, T. I. C., Parur) said that, in the governance of a civilised and progressive people, it was in the best interests of the Government to gradually extend the people's share in the administration of their country. To consult those whose interests it was the duty of the governing body to safeguard and advance and to share with them, in increasing degrees, the duties and responsibilities of administration, had been the end and aim of the wise and far-seeing statesmen of all times. The only field of local self-government now extended to the people of the State was the Town Improvement Committees. Most of the Committees were of recent origin and the legislation touching them was nearly 14 years old. The working of the Committees had been, in some cases, not quite satisfactory, but it was doubtful whether, under the existing legislation, any appreciable improvement could be effected in their administration. The fact had already been recognised by the Government and an amendment of the enactment was at present under their consideration. The opinions of all the Committees had been called for in that connection and it was hoped that due weight would be given to them at the time of drafting the proposed legislation.

The object of all municipal institutions was "not merely to get local work efficiently done but also to develop the civic spirit and raise the level of general intelligence among the people." It was necessary to keep both those objects in view in framing any legislation touching such institutions and also in judging their work. Mistakes would be made and blunders might be committed in the administration of those institutions, for, what was called public life had not yet passed the stage of childhood in the country. Tact and sympathy and wise guidance on the part of the Government were absolutely necessary for some time to come. He, therefore, suggested that the present Regulation should be wholly recast on the models of the existing

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enactments on the subject in British India. The Regulation should provide for the gradual withdrawal of the Government control in the administration of all municipal institutions, reserving to the Government the right to act as they deemed fit in certain important and specified cases. As regards the constitution of the Committee, provision should be made for the gradual extension of the principle of election of all members of the Committee including its President. As a first step in that direction, the question of the nomination of non-official Presidents, wherever possible, should be taken in hand without delay. As regards the administration, he pleaded that, as far as possible, it should be entirely left in the hands of the Committee. The President as the executive head of the Committee should be subject to the direction and control of the Committee in all matters. He also proposed the extension of the scope and functions of the Committee and urged on the Government the necessity of rendering all municipal institutions full and ample financial assistance in carrying on their work. It was no use to create municipal institutions and ask them to find the wherewithal if they wanted more of the things of the world than they could afford and there was no justification for such an attitude in Travancore.

In order to extend the field of local self-government, he suggested the formation of District and Taluk Boards and the creation of Village Panchayats. Sanitation, elementary education and minor public works including minor irrigation might be advantageously left to the control of those bodies. A certain portion of the forests now reserved should be set apart for the use and under the control of the adjoining villagers. That would remove many of the grievances yearly brought to the notice of the Government in the Assembly. The District Boards might be made the controlling authorities of all those bodies and might be empowered to deal with major P. W. D. works up to a certain limit and they should also be made an advisory body as regards all major P. W. D. works in their districts. In constituting the local bodies and financing them, the same liberal spirit as that to be pursued in the case of the municipalities should be followed. Additional taxation would be necessary in case those bodies were established; but it would be borne cheerfully by the people, provided they saw that the Goverment were also willing to come to their help with a willing heart and an open hand. As regards the Village Panchayats to be established in accordance with Regulation I of 1090, the Member said that, if those Panchayats were to serve the objects for the realisation of which they were to be created, great care should be bestowed on the character and position of those selected to discharge the functions of those courts. Education, wealth, character and status should all be given their due weight, but the one factor that should weigh most in the selection of a candidate was his character. Unless that was always borne in mind by the official on whom the responsibility of choosing the Judges of those Panchayats practically lay, the institution of those courts was not likely to end in any good results, and the Member hoped that the Government would, on that account, bestow their careful attention on the matter.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

97. Reorganisation of the older Town Improvement Committees by appointing non-official Presidents and enlarging their powers.

Mr. C. Sankara Menon B. A., B. L. (Member, T. I. C., Quilon) said that, since the Government had decided to amend the Towns Conservancy and Improvement Regulation and as the Quilon Committee had already given their views as to the lines on which the powers of the Committee should be enlarged, he would not re-iterate those views at the Assembly. He would, however, emphasise one or two points. Though the Government had recognised the principle or policy of appointing non-official Presidents to the Committees, they were, he regretted to observe, rather slow and even reluctant to put the policy into practice. The Government had given the assurance that the experiment made at Alleppey was, at any rate, not a failure. If the object of creating the Committees was to instruct and encourage the people in the art of self-government, he failed to see how that end could be achieved without entrusting certain responsibilities to the Committees. In Cochin and in British Malabar, the experiment was no failure. In Cochin, the Committees were but four years old, and

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